

Winchester Frederick County Youth Football League

2023 Cheerleading Rules

I. About Us

The Cheerleading Program is a part of the Winchester Frederick County Football League (WFYFL). We are not our own entity. We abide by the rules and regulations set forth by the WFYFL Board of Directors.

II. Purpose

- To develop good sportsmanship and instill a spirit of cooperation and friendliness among the participants
- To provide an opportunity for participants to learn the fundamentals of all the aspects of cheerleading.
- To provide fun and enjoyment in a healthy activity.

III. Participants

- The program is open to participants who are between the ages of 5-6-7 for our Pee Wee Cheer Division and 8-13 years old for our Team Cheer Division. Effective date for age determination is August 1 of the current year. Therefore, participants must turn the age of 5 by August 1 and cannot be the age of 14 before August 1.
- Pee Wee Cheer Participants will be divided into up to 2 squads (depending on the amount of football squads registered) to cheer for our U7 year old division by the Director of Cheerleading. In the event we do not have enough football players signed up.
- Team/Sideline Cheer Participants will be divided into 3 or 4 squads, (depending on the number of football squads registered), by the Director of Cheerleading.
- Participants who have siblings playing for a WFYFL team will be assigned to their sibling's team. Consideration will be given to special requested assignments. These requests must be made in writing with the reason for the request. All decisions will be made final by the Director of Cheerleading and the WFYFL Board of Directors. Children of cheerleading and/or football coaches will be assigned to their respective squad.
- Cheerleading registration will be conducted online and during the same week as the football registration. Dates for these will be determined by the WFYFL.
- Cheer camps and competitions may be incorporated into the cheer schedule with the approval from the Director of Cheerleading and the WFYFL Board of Directors.

IV. Equipment

- Uniforms will be purchased for sideline cheer and will be the property of each girl with a paid registration. Pom poms and gray hoodies will remain as official equipment provided by the WFYFL and must be returned at the end of the season in good condition. Any changes to the original state of the hoodies or pompons must be approved by the Director of Cheerleading and the WFYFL Board of Directors. Participants who do not wear the official uniforms and/or accessories chosen by teams will be unable to participate.
- All Cheerleaders are required to wear comfortable athletic shoes when practicing and/or performing. All shoes must be white, clean and in good condition.
- NO uniform or equipment will be replaced unless the damaged item is returned.
- NO new uniform or equipment will be issued to a participant until all other items are returned from previous seasons use (if required).

V. Practices and Games

- Practices are held Monday-Thursday – 5:45 -7:30pm. All practices will be held at Jim Barnett Park at the set scheduled times. (Practice ending times may vary).
- Pee Wee Cheer Squads will practice at least 2 days a week. The schedule will be up to the discretion of the coaches working together with parents.
- There will be no exceptions to location or time. This is due to insurance liability reasons. A Friday practice may be added to the schedule for makeups or Competition participants.
- If a cheerleader misses two (2) or more consecutive games and/or practices for **unexcused** reasons, she will be required to sit out at least one (1) quarter of the next game in attendance as a penalty.
- All practices will be structured including warm-ups, cheers, dance, stunts and jumps.
- Arrive to practice with hair in a ponytail, and appropriate practice clothes, NO flip-flops, gum, jewelry or long fingernails.
- Arrive to games in full uniform. (Bring appropriate accessories, bow, socks, undershirt, jacket, leggings) in case they are needed.
- All members of each squad should look the same when cheering at games. In example; wearing the same bows, all wearing white shoes, each girl either wearing undershirt or not wearing undershirt, each girl wearing jacket or not wearing jacket, each girl with the same color leggings). Each squad should be consistent and look sharp when performing.
- Please use the restroom prior to practice (we will have group breaks during practice)
- Please bring a bottle of water with you to practice.
- All squad changes must be made prior to the first football game of the season.
- All squads are required to attend all of their teams' games with NO exceptions unless otherwise arranged by the Cheerleading Director. As stated in the next Section (VI. Coaches Responsibilities), at least one (1) Coach must be in attendance for all games and practices.
- Please arrive to games ready to go - use the bathroom and eat prior to this time.
- UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A SQUAD NOT SHOW UP FOR A GAME unless due to an inclement weather/cancellation announcement or prior approval of the cheer director.
- Teams are to cheer for all four (4) quarters of a game unless a game is called due to an inclement weather/cancellation announcement, squads will not leave early.
- All girls and coaches will demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times or will be asked to leave practice or a game.
- Current cheerleaders may be asked to demonstrate a cheer to their team but may not lead practice on in any way be "in charge" of the other girls. All girls are equals.

VI. Coaches Responsibilities

- Each team must have a minimum of one (1) coach but it is recommended they have one (1) Head Coach and one (1) Assistant Coach. One (1) team mom is permissible. The Director of Cheerleading and the WFYFL Board of Directors must approve all Coaches. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure that anyone working with the children has been approved by Winchester Parks and Recreation Department.
- Team Coaches are to provide a safe environment for practices and games. Make sure all areas are clear of any hazards.
- All Head Cheerleading coaches will be required to complete Cheer Certification each year.
- All Head Cheerleading coaches will be required to complete a background check through the parks and recreation every 2 years.

- Coaches must maintain a high level of awareness for the safety of their team throughout practices and games. Teams should have a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes prior to a practice or game for warm up and making any needed changes.
- Coaches and parents are to discuss adult matters or issues with the program, coaching, etc. after or during practice but not in front of the children.
- Coaches are responsible for the safeguarding and timely return of all uniforms if required and pompons issued by the WFYFL.
- The Coaches are to see that each participant on the squad has the proper uniform.
- It is the Coaches' responsibility to teach participants how to cheer or see that someone is made available to teach them.
- Each team's Coaches must notify all team participants of:
 1. The rules, regulations and by-laws set forth by the WFYFL.
 2. Scheduled games, play-offs and practices.
 3. Cancellations and/or make-ups as indicated by the WFYFL.
- Current rosters are to be maintained by the Coaches and readily available to WFYFL.
- Coaches must be present at each practice and game. This is the reason for two (2) Coaches so that at least one (1) is in attendance. If neither Coach is able to attend, they must notify the Director of Cheerleading immediately so that supervision for their team can be provided.
- Team Coaches are to oversee that proper conduct is maintained among the squad and their followers.
- No cheerleader is allowed to leave unless a Coach sees the parent. Cheerleaders are to remain together with their Coach.
- If a cheerleader is to be picked up by someone other than a parent, written permission must be given prior to releasing the child.
- Coaches are not to leave until practice or games until all cheerleaders have been released.
- Create a half time routine consisting of either a cheer or a dance to be performed at half time at each game.
- Create a competition routine and practice schedule for your squad to be performed at the end of season competition and any other competitions scheduled by the Director of Cheerleading.

VII. Inclement Weather/Cancellations

- The WFYFL reserves the right to cancel games when conditions present possible health problems such as heat and/or storms. The WFYFL will use caution when making these decisions.
- Cancellations due to inclement weather will be available online at www.wfyfl.org or <http://www.winchesterva.gov/parks> or on the WFYFL facebook, Instagram or Twitter pages.
- If weather conditions are questionable and no cancellations have been announced, then report for your game. NOTE: Make-up games will be posted to www.wfyfl.org
- Use extreme precautions in bad weather, especially during lightening and thunderstorms. Coaches should have cheerleaders and parents wait in their vehicles until officials arrive if it is storming before a game or until the game is called (if already started).

VIII. Competition (Fall Season)

- All girls on a sideline squad (above U7) will be required to participate in the end of season competition unless circumstances or health concerns would prohibit them. (Fall Season)
- There will be extra practices to prepare for Competition. (Fall Season)

- Only members of youth Cheer Squads will be permitted to compete in the end of season Competition.
- All music must be approved by the Director of Cheerleading prior to the competition.
- Parents, cheerleaders and coaches will maintain a respectful and sportsmanlike attitude during all competition activities.
- All decisions made by the judges of the competition are final and must be accepted regardless of the outcome.

IX. General Rules

- Cell phones are to be turned off during practices and games.
- Parents, siblings and friends will not be permitted on the practice field during practice due to insurance liability reasons. You may sit close to the fences, but not out in the field.
- Parents are not to interfere with coaches during practices. Allow your coaches to coach, that's their job.
- Squads will only cheer for their football game.
- No cheer will be used that will encourage competition between squads. Cheers should be in "good taste" and should be encouraging to the squad's team, not derogatory to the opposing team.
- No cheer or dance should incorporate any inappropriate body movements.
- All dances will be age appropriate and must be approved by the Cheer Director (no provocative dancing **AT ALL** will be permitted.)
- Stunting can consist of shoulder sits, halves and thigh mounts. These are contingent on the skill level of the team and will be on a team-to-team basis with the approval of the Director of Cheerleading. Pee Wee Squads are prohibited from doing stunts higher than waist level.
- The use of tobacco products by coaches, parents and participants is prohibited during practices and games.
- The WFYFL will not change the game schedule due to a participant's involvement in school, scout, church or any other activity.

Remember, your coaches are all volunteers and do their best for your girls. Please pitch in and help when necessary. We rely on our parents to help be our eyes and ears and to be understanding and help us take care of any problems or issues that may arise during the season. Remember... this experience is supposed to be fun (for all of us). Let's do our best to maintain that atmosphere for the girls.